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**Letter dated 19 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of
Myanmar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I wish to refer to the two letters from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations circulated in General Assembly documents A/53/215 dated 6 August 1998 and A/53/404 dated 18 September 1998, both with attached statements by the Presidency of the European Union on the recent developments in Myanmar.

Both statements contain allegations which misrepresent the recent developments in my country, and I would like to present the facts in order to rectify those misrepresentations point by point.

One statement alleges that the authorities of Myanmar had hindered the free movement of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and that she was forced to return to Yangon. This allegation is misleading. It is commonly known and easily verifiable that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi moves about freely in the capital, meeting with members of diplomatic missions, journalists, foreign visitors and her party members in Yangon. Despite this, she attempted to travel outside Yangon with the apparent motive of creating chaos and disorder by staging political rallies without permission from the authorities in the Ayeyarwady Division and to provoke the Government into taking legal action. The Government, however, acted with restraint and merely asked her not to travel outside Yangon to preserve peace and tranquillity as well as for her own security, for the Government had taken full responsibility at her own request. It may be mentioned that the Government is responsible for the security of all political leaders in the country. While she obstinately stayed in her car, the authorities made every effort to ensure her safety and even her comfort. When the National League for Democracy (NLD) Central Executive Committee members requested medical attention, the authorities promptly complied and made arrangements for her two personal physicians to visit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

As a matter of fact, it was under the advice of her physicians and at the request of NLD that the authorities made necessary arrangements to enable her to return to her residence. Because of her weak physical condition, the authorities even provided two female Red Cross



officials, not security officials as alleged, to accompany her back home. It was a humanitarian gesture on the part of the Government made in the interest of her own welfare.

In the same statement, the European Union also expressed hope that the Government of Myanmar would take all necessary steps to start a meaningful dialogue. In this connection, I wish to state that the Government of the Union of Myanmar has laid down a systematic programme for transition to a new political system, taking into account the political, economic, social and geopolitical conditions of the country. Under the programme, a National Convention process was started in January 1993 with the objective of drafting a firm and enduring constitution. The National Convention is a systematic political process in which delegates from political parties, representatives-elect, national races, peasants, workers, intellectuals and intelligentsia, service personnel and other invited guests are fully participating in a dialogue and striving for the emergence of a firm and enduring constitution. It is also worth mentioning that 86 elected NLD party representatives had participated in the National Convention from 1993 until November 1995, when they suddenly decided to withdraw from the process.

There should, however, be no doubt that a democratic Government will be formed based on the constitution which will emerge from the National Convention. The National Convention has made considerable progress and is deliberating the very delicate and sensitive issue of power-sharing between the central organs of the State and those of states and regions. As soon as a consensus has been achieved on this delicate issue, the National Convention process will be able to move forward with added momentum.

It must be stressed that the National Convention is the most appropriate forum and representative of all ethnic nationalities and all strata of the society. There is indeed no other alternative to the process. Under the circumstances, any other alternative will be detrimental to the interests of the country.

The allegations of detention contained in another statement are misleading, too. The fact is that NLD is attempting to illegally convene a parliament which would pose a serious threat to the existing peace and stability of the country, which is punishable under existing laws. This could also lead to a chaotic political situation. Before the situation came to such a pass and to avert unnecessary action, the Government invited some NLD members to government guest houses for the purpose of exchanging views on the consequences of the actions of NLD which could adversely affect peace and tranquillity of the State.

I should like to emphasize that the Government's action is the most lenient possible measure in fulfilment of its fundamental obligation to protect the right of all citizens to live in a safe, secure and stable environment. The invitees were treated with courtesy and hospitality, which should not be equated with conditions of detention or arrest. It is obvious that there is a significant distinction between the status of the invitees under question and those detained for violation of existing laws.

Concerning allegations of political detention, I should like to state that no harsh and draconian laws that allow the Government to arbitrarily arrest a member of a political party exist in Myanmar. If there was any arrest, it could only be due to violation of existing laws, since political beliefs or membership in a political party have never been a reason for arrest.

In view of the facts mentioned above, my Government has no choice but to totally reject the allegations contained in both statements under reference.

I should like to request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 110.

(Signed) Win **Mra**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
